

# Fact Sheet: Working with victims of hate<sup>1,2</sup>

- A hate crime is: “...a criminal violation motivated by hate, based on race, national or ethnic origin, language, colour, religion, sex, age, mental or physical disability, sexual orientation or gender identity or expression or any other similar factor.” (Uniform Crime Reporting Survey 2.2 Definition).
- Support workers helping victims should focus on how the victim defines the crime, not just on legal definitions.
- Trauma-informed care is an empowering approach that recognizes and respects the victim’s history of trauma and works to avoid further traumatization.
- Full and informed consent is part of providing ethical care that helps the victim direct their own healing journey.
- Support workers should seek out learning, consultation, and supervision to address blind spots and personal biases. Online self-assessment tools may be helpful.
- Hate crimes create “waves of victims,” harming the victim, their family, their identity group, and society at large.
- Support workers should be aware of the importance of how the victim views their culture, and personal and cultural identities and how they have faced and coped with prejudice in society.
- Support workers should reflect on the systemic nature of prejudice. How might prejudice, systemic discrimination, and hate crime victimization impact how the victim approaches the support worker and the professional relationship?
- It would be helpful if support workers could assess what supports the victim has in the community and whether they have good coping models.
- Many victims of hate crimes do not report the crime to authorities. Support workers may face this reluctance to report in working with hate crime victims.
- Workers are encouraged to access the internet to find resources specific to their client’s identity group and issues.

## Compared to before their victimization, victims of hate crimes often:

- **Feel less secure** (Abu-Ras & Suarez 2009; Ashraf & Nassar, 2018; Awan, & Zempi, 2015; Boeckmann & Turpin-Petrosino, 2002; Garnetts et al., 1990; Huang & Tsai, 2022; Huynh et al., 2022; Janoff, 2005; Mason-Bish & Duggan, 2020; Staub, 1996)
- **See the world as less orderly and meaningful** (Garnetts et al., 1990)
- **Have lower self-worth** (Dunbar, 2006; Garnetts et al., 1990; Janoff, 2005)

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<sup>1</sup> By James K. Hill, Phd, 2023. The views expressed in this report are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Department of Justice Canada or the government of Canada. This sheet forms part of a report available at: <https://www.justice.gc.ca/eng/rp-pr/jr/wwwh2-tavh2/index.html>

<sup>2</sup> For more information, please contact: [Rsd-drs@justice.gc.ca](mailto:Rsd-drs@justice.gc.ca)

- **Feel less effective** (Staub, 1996)
- **Engage in avoidance and isolation** (Cramer et al., 2018; Funnell, 2015; Samari, Alcalá, H& Sharif, 2018)
- **Have problems in personal relationships** (Janoff, 2005; Staub, 1996)
- **Feel guilty and blame themselves** (Dunbar, 2006; Wertheimer, 1990)
- **Are less empathic towards other hate crime victims or engage in victim-blaming** (Paterson et al., 2019b)
- **Question their ability to protect themselves** (Staub, 1996)
- **Feel they can not meet goals in life** (Staub, 1996)
- **Feel anger toward the larger community or sub-community** (Herek et al., 1997; Janoff, 2005; Staub, 1996)
- **Feel excluded from the greater society, affecting their identity** (Ashraf & Nassar, 2018)
- **Experience depression** (Awan, & Zempi, 2015; Burton et al., 2013; Feddes & Jonas (2020; Herek et al., 1997; Huynh, Raval & Freeman, 2022; Inman et al., 2021; Janoff, 2005; Lee & Waters, 2021)
- **Experience anxiety or Post Traumatic Stress** (Alhaboby, et al., 2016; Cramer et al., 2018; Garnetts et al., 1990; Herek et al., 1997; Huynh et al., 2022; Inman et al., 2021; Janoff, 2005; Lee & Waters, 2021; Sims et al., 2022)
- **May experience increased thoughts of suicide** (Burton et al., 2013; Cramer et al., 2018; Duncan & Hatzenbuehler, 2014)
- **Experience sleep problems** (Lee & Waters, 2021)
- **Experience headaches, nightmares, crying, agitation, restlessness, and weight loss** (Garnetts et al., 1990; Janoff, 2005)
- **Have increased use of drugs and/or alcohol** (Janoff, 2005)
- **May engage in social action and advocacy** (Sheehan et al., 2021)

### **Compared with non-hate crime victims, hate crime victims are more likely to:**

- **Suffer more brutal attacks** (Janoff, 2005; Willis, 2004) **and are almost three times more likely to experience severe injury** (Messner et al., 2004)
- **Report more distress** (Herek et al., 1997; Herek et al., 1999; McDevitt et al., 2001; Mjoseh, 1998)
- **Report higher levels of fear** (Craig-Henderson & Sloan, 2003; Herek et al., 2002; McDevitt et al., 2001)
- **Report higher levels of depression, anxiety, anger, and PTSD symptoms** (Alhaboby, et al., 2016; Herek et al., 1997; McDevitt et al., 2001). **However, other researchers found that there were no differences between the two groups with respect to depression** (Rose & Mechanic, 2002)
- **See others as dangerous** (Herek et al., 1997; Herek et al., 1999)

- **See the world as unsafe** (Herek et al., 1999; McDevitt et al., 2001)
- **Rate their risk of future victimization as higher** (Herek et al., 1997)
- **Show a relatively low sense of personal mastery** (Herek et al., 1999)
- **See personal setbacks as related to prejudice** (Herek et al., 1999)
- **Report overcoming the incident as “very difficult”** (McDevitt et al., 2001)
- **Report the incident as having a big impact on their life** (Craig-Henderson & Sloan, 2003)
- **Report more intrusive thoughts of the incident and feeling like they do not want to live any longer** (McDevitt et al., 2001)
- **Report losing their job** (McDevitt et al., 2001)
- **Report significant health problems** (McDevitt et al., 2001)

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